

# Right Tree in the Right Place

The right tree in the right place is a phrase worth remembering. Think of it like this: a Maserati may be the perfect car for cruising down a road in the Italian countryside, but hauling mulch in one would be inconvenient. Similarly, there is not one perfect tree for all situations. Some, such as dogwoods, stay small their whole lives; others, such as burr oaks, become large and stately. Just like picking an automobile that is right for you, it's important that you pick a tree that is right for the place you intend to plant it.

## Consider the tree's purpose

First, decide how you would like the tree to function. Are you planting this tree as a screen from the neighbors, an accent by your front door, for shade or for greening your surroundings? Are you interested in aesthetics such as fall color and spring flowers? Do you want to provide food and shelter for birds and other wildlife?

## Look up, down and all around

Next, critique your site. Are there structures such as sidewalks, gardens or other trees to be avoided? How much space is there for a tree to grow? If you remember nothing else, LOOK UP! A common mistake is to plant a small sapling that will mature into a large, shade tree directly under a power line. This is a no-win situation for you, the tree and the utility company. Large shade

trees should be planted at least 45 feet from overhead utility wires. If your site is close to utility lines, consider planting trees that stay small or plant shrubs.

## Plant large trees for big benefits

Maximize benefits from trees. If there is adequate room, consider planting a large shade tree. The benefits from shade trees greatly outweigh those from small, ornamental trees. This is true not only for your yard, neighborhood and community, but for the planet, as well. Moreover, the branches of a big tree are up and out of the way of people and traffic. Plant large trees on the east and west sides of your home to maximize energy savings.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, a big yard tree gives us benefits of about \$55 every year of its life and lives approximately 120 years. A small tree gives us \$23 in benefits annually and can be expected to live for only 30 years. In its lifetime, a mature tree will provide about \$4,500 in value to a community; a small tree, only \$250.

Large trees remove 60 to 70 times more pollution than small trees. Neighborhoods with large, mature trees can be up to 11 degrees cooler in the summer than those without shade. One big tree in a community provides the cooling equivalent of five air conditioners running 20 hours per day, and can cut cooling and heating costs by 10 percent. Big trees also increase property values by approximately \$1,000 per tree in a yard.

*Large trees on the east and west sides provide shade that can lower cooling costs by 10 percent.*

*Plant shrubs or small trees, such as dwarf fruit trees or small flowering trees, under power lines to avoid conflicts.*

*Small evergreens are useful as privacy screens. All trees serve as habitat for songbirds and wildlife.*

*Large street trees improve curb appeal, increasing real estate values by 5 to 20 percent. They also provide shade and cool paved surfaces.*



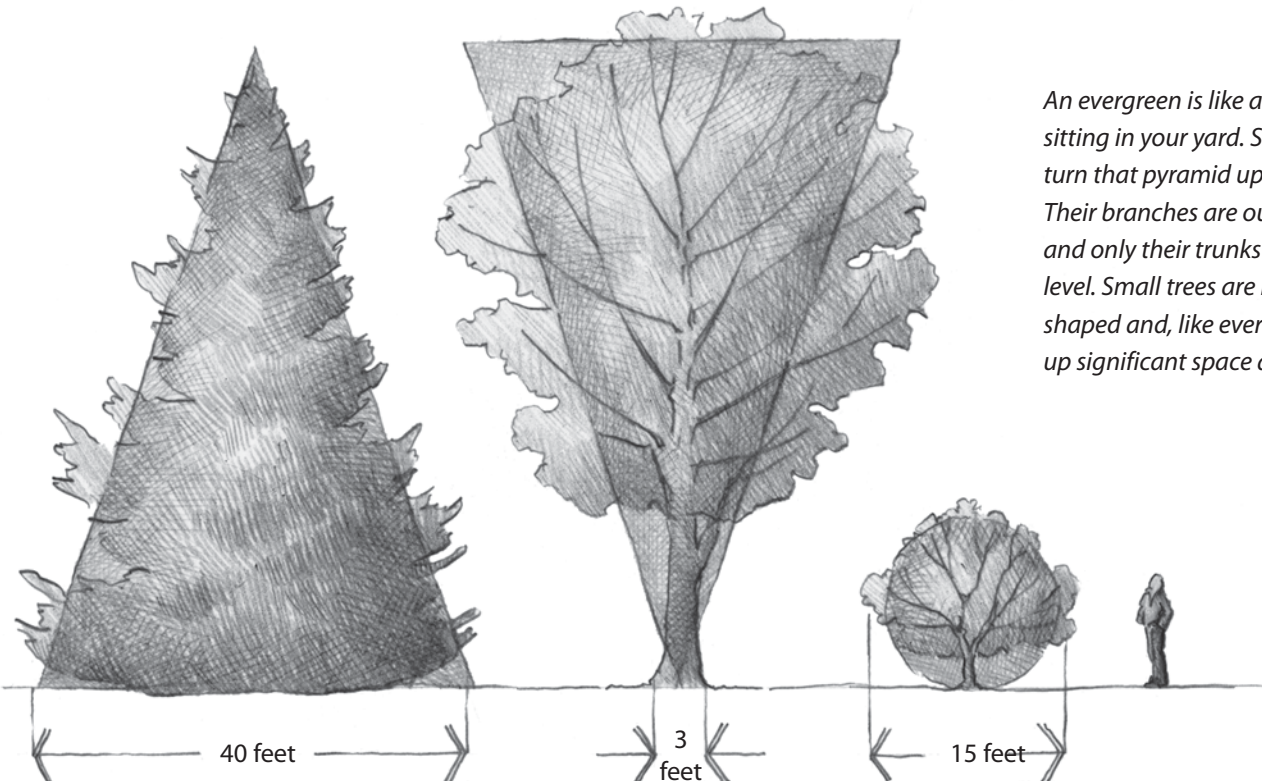
Do your research

In order to plant the right tree in the right place, **do your research**. Consider the following checklist of important characteristics when selecting a tree:

- ✓ height and width at maturity
- ✓ form
- ✓ insect and disease susceptibility
- ✓ fall color
- ✓ interesting features such as bark, fragrance, flowers
- ✓ evergreen or deciduous
- ✓ shade preference
- ✓ fruit
- ✓ hardiness
- ✓ reproduction method (seed or suckers)
- ✓ native to Missouri
- ✓ soil preference
- ✓ growth rate
- ✓ soil moisture requirements and tolerances

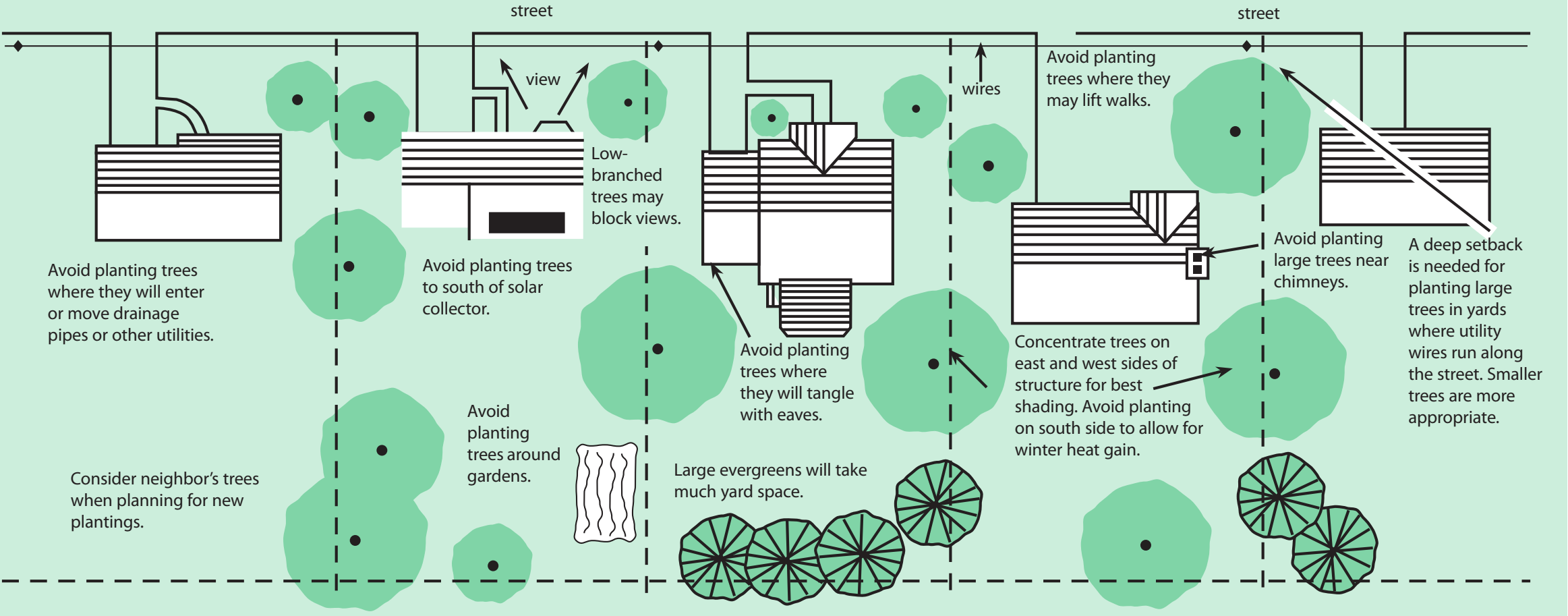
If you feel overwhelmed by the number of choices available, perhaps you'd be interested in making your selection from a short list of reliable trees. Pick up a copy of our booklet, *Missouri Urban Trees*, for more details and photographs. Meanwhile, it is hard to go wrong with any of these:

Big trees	Small trees	Evergreens
Oak	Redbud	Spruce
Linden	Dogwood	Cedar
Hard maple	Serviceberry	Hemlock
Thornless honeylocust	Dwarf orchard (peach, apple etc.)	Pine
River birch	Hornbeam	
Kentucky coffeetree	Japanese maple	
Ginkgo		



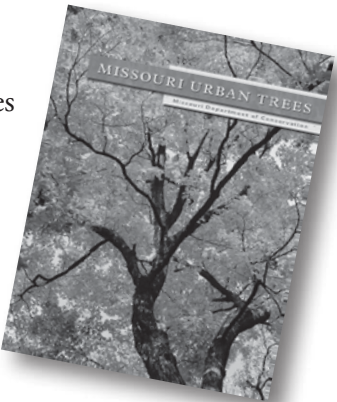
An evergreen is like a pyramid sitting in your yard. Shade trees turn that pyramid upside down. Their branches are out of the way, and only their trunks are at ground level. Small trees are more ball-shaped and, like evergreens, take up significant space at ground level.

Planting Trees Around Your House



Learn more about trees with these MDC publications

- \*Missouri Urban Trees
  - \*Seedling Order Form
  - \*Conservation Shrubs and Trees
  - \*Fifty Common Trees of Missouri
  - Trees of Missouri Field Guide
  - Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri Field Guide
  - Tried and True Missouri
  - Native Plants for Your Yard
  - A Key to Missouri Trees in Winter
- \*These free publications are available by e-mailing [pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov](mailto:pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov) or by writing to MDC Publications, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180



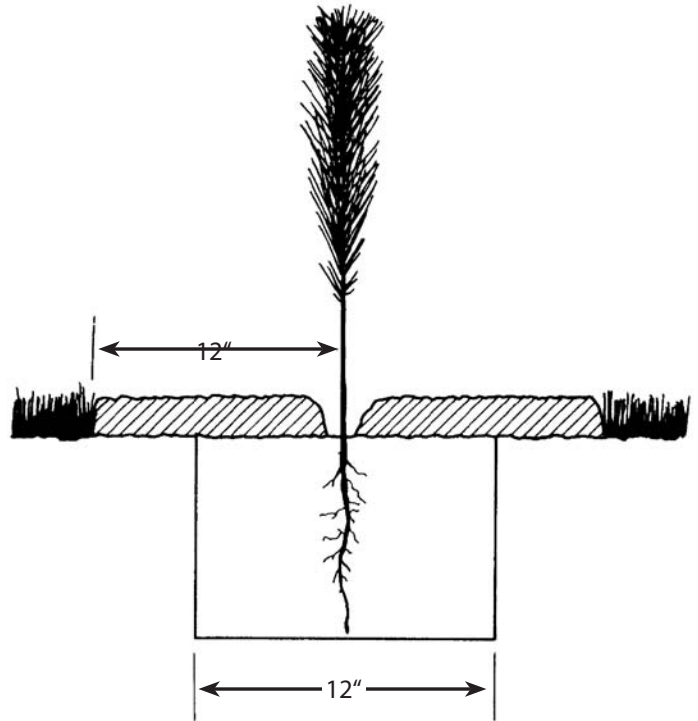
The other publications are for sale and may be ordered at: [www.mdcnatureshop.com](http://www.mdcnatureshop.com) or by calling toll free, 1-877-521-8632

# Planting Your Seedling Correctly

The majority of a tree's feeder roots are in the upper 6 inches of soil, where they compete with grass roots for oxygen, moisture and nutrients. Feeder roots thrive on soil that is loose, moist and fertile—conditions often lacking in soils around homes. In recognition of this, you might consider a planting area, rather than just a hole.

## Tips for success

1. Plant your tree as soon as possible.
2. If you are not able to plant it the day you receive it, place it in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator. **DO NOT FREEZE!**
3. Select a planting site that will give the tree room to grow and has the correct light conditions.
4. Dig the initial hole as deep as the root system and about a foot wide.
5. Remove the seedling from the bag and place it in the hole. Make sure the roots are spread out and are not crowded or bent.
6. Crumble the soil back around the roots and pack firmly with your hands.
7. Water the tree thoroughly to finish packing the soil around the roots.
8. Mulch the planting area to a depth of 2 inches and to a radius of 9 to 12 inches around the tree. Organic mulches such as compost, wood chips or decorative bark may be used.
9. New trees need the equivalent of 1 to 1.5 inches of rainfall per week during the first four years. Water the tree weekly during dry periods.



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